ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey

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December 22, 1976

Mr. Harry Callaghan
First Jersey National Bank
1 Exchange Place
Jersey City, New Jersey 07303

Dear Mr. Callaghan:

I am enclosing a case statement describing Aspira's programs for you to read prior to our meeting. However, I will give you a short synopsis of what Aspira is all about.

Established in 1969 to promote post-secondary education and develop community involvement and commitment for Puerto Rican and other Hispanic junior and senior high school students in New Jersey, Aspira's record is impressive.

Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey has counseled over 3,700 students through its networks of Aspira clubs in public schools throughout Essex, Passaic and Hudson Counties, encouraging students to stay in school and graduate, to continue on in their education, and to return to form a core of skilled, educated and concerned leaders in the Puerto Rican and Hispanic communities. In an educational breakthrough, Aspira counselors have been welcomed as an integral part of the school system. They are accepted by the superintendents and guidance counselors as a complementary arm of the educational system's guidance program.

Aspira has helped 1,253 students not only to complete high school, but also to gain admittance to junior colleges, universities, medical and law schools. In 1975-76 alone, 315 students were accepted for college and an additional 12 for medical and graduate school. (Please see attached list.)

Aspira has implemented a Health Careers Program which introduces students to the options available in the medical and allied health careers fields. Through workshops, counseling and internship programs, students are made aware of the opportunities open to them

in this vital and expanding career field. Last year ten students were admitted to medical school, an increase of 100% over 1974-75. Other students are working toward such careers as Technician, Nurse, and other health-related specialties.

With funds from foundations, public educational agencies and major New Jersey Corporations such as First Jersey National Bank, Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey has been able to provide these services to its students.

However, current economic conditions and the shortage of available public funds now threaten the viability of Aspira's programs. New limitations on such support are reducing the agency's capabilities at the very time when Puerto Rican youth are more than ever looking for assistance. Young people who have had their sights raised face the prospect of seeing their hopes and aspirations dashed. At the same time, the community of Puerto Ricans, already at the bottom of the economic ladder, are finding their dreams of personal and community programs further out of reach than ever. According to the 1976 U.S. commission on Civil Rights report, the poor socio-economic position of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. is actually worsening. In 1970, 29% of all Puerto Ricans lived in poverty; by 1974, the figure had risen to 33%. All income indicators since 1974 have, unfortunately, been in a negative direction.

I look forward to meeting with you to discuss Aspira's progress and programs and will call your office to arrange an appointment.

Sincerely,

Grizel Ubarry

Grizel Ubarry
Executive Director

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